

INDUSTRY

Education

BUSINESS CHALLENGES

Constantly increasing amounts of data

Existing solution at capacity

Unreliable data back-up and restore

BUSINESS SOLUTIONS

NetApp FAS920

Clustered Filer

NetApp Nearstore R200

Overland Tape Library

Bakbone NetVault Enterprise

BUSINESS BENEFITS

Unified storage & back-up architecture

Redundancy cover and high availability of systems

Disaster recovery for mission critical resources

Highly scalable architecture to help manage continuing growth

University of Durham looks to the future with enterprise storage and back-up

The customer

University of Durham is a world-class university based at two locations, in the city of Durham and at the Queen's Campus in Stockton.

The University is collegiate, with colleges providing residential, social and welfare facilities for their student members, and creating a sense of community for staff and students together. Its academic teaching and research programmes are delivered through departments contained within three faculties: Arts and Humanities, Science, and Social Sciences and Health.

“We worked closely with Alpha to specify the appropriate configuration and to redesign our back-up architecture.”

Paul Jones Head of IT Services
University of Durham

The challenge

The University became aware of the need to upgrade its storage and back-up platform as part of ongoing IT development.

Due to the increase in the amount of data on the network, the previous systems had begun to peak in terms of storage resources and performance, while the centralised back-up infrastructure was nearing the end of its life with regard to support agreements.

The previous back-up strategy was based on Sun Solstice software, which would initially cache to disk before streaming off to multiple tape devices. However, numerous issues arose with the inability of Solstice to back-up the NetApp Filers using the specified NDMP agent. The problem escalated over a long period of time, which led to questions regarding the overall support capabilities for the Solstice environment.

Because the University operates in a mixed operating system and application environment, there was a need to continue with a storage system that would continue to fulfil all its needs whilst also providing additional scalability and performance.



 **PLATINUM**
Authorized Reseller


Microsoft
CERTIFIED
Partner


BakBone
SOFTWARE

The solution

The University's requirements were examined in the context of its overall developments plans, taking account of present and future demands on the system in terms of performance and scalability.

After full analysis and consultation, Alpha recommended upgrading the existing Net App FAS810 clustered filers to the new series of FAS920 clustered filers. Alongside this, it was decided to install Bakbone Netvault back-up software, incorporating NetApp R200 Nearstore with 16-Terabyte of disk.

The Network Appliance architecture enables users to upgrade filer-based systems easily and effectively. Whilst upgrades incur some downtime, the impact is minimal and seamless to the environment once the new units are implemented.

Alpha faced several challenges with the back-up infrastructure. Due to the size of the server infrastructure and the diversity of operating systems/applications, it was difficult to match all the requirements in one unified system. However, the problems were resolved with the installation of Bakbone Netvault Enterprise version, which was deployed across more than 75 server nodes within the University's overall storage architecture.

Alpha also incorporated a 16 Terabyte NetApp Nearstore (R200) device within the new Netvault strategy. Whilst providing disaster recovery facilities for the clustered 'production' filers, Nearstore also acts as a large caching device for back-ups before data is securely streamed off to tape at a convenient time.

The back-up to tape can be done in a live environment eliminating the need for systems to be shut down as in traditional back-up solutions. This technology also means the University can instantly restore data from the Nearstore in the event of a failure.

The benefits for University of Durham

- Unified storage & back-up architecture
- Redundancy cover and high availability of systems
- Disaster recovery for mission critical resources
- Highly scalable architecture to help manage continuing growth of University activities
- Tiered storage to ensure easy accessibility of data

The verdict

“Over the last few years we have invested in a resilient central storage facility based on clustered NetApp filers. When we came to build upon this with Nearstore provision for DR purposes and to upgrade our original facility, we worked closely with Alpha to specify the appropriate configuration and to redesign our back-up architecture. We are very satisfied with the outcome which is a central element in the University's IT provision.”

Paul Jones Head of IT Services
University of Durham

About Alpha

Alpha is a leading supplier of data management solutions. Established in 1981, Alpha provides its UK wide customer base with the peace of mind that their data is safe.

Maximising return on your investment from data management implementations takes experience, commitment and a passion for excellence. Alpha makes it simple and affordable for customers to implement enterprise class data management solutions all through a single, experienced provider.

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ALPHA
INTUITIVE DATA MANAGEMENT

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